

130 KIDERLEN-

WACHTER, THE MAN OF AGADIR

continued for ten years without a break. William II enjoyed his jokes and risky stories, though he never became in any real sense the Kaiser's friend.

Kiderlen's importance begins with the fall of Bismarck in 1890, Caprivi, the new Chancellor, was ignorant of foreign affairs, and Marschall, the successor of Herbert Bismarck as Foreign Minister, was by training a jurist. The changing of the guard left Holstein in undisputed command. Careers were usually made or marred, not by the Emperor, the Chancellor or the Foreign Minister, but by the *Eminence Grise*, the mystery man of the Wilhelmstrasse who had lent a hand in the overthrow of the Iron Chancellor himself. Next in the official hierarchy, though far below him in authority, were Kiderlen and Eulenburg. Despite their diverse character and tastes the three men worked harmoniously together till the juniors left for diplomatic posts. Kiderlen, unlike Eulenburg, retained till the end the friendship of the most cantankerous and suspicious old man in the world. Nobody was less of the routine official type. His Bohemian ways were not to every-body's taste, and his domestic life was not beyond reproach. Like many men of superabundant vitality, he frankly enjoyed what are called the pleasures of life. "The Swabian," writes his colleague Hammann, Chief of the Press Department, "was a man of moods. It was often difficult to deal with his obstinacy. In extreme cases one had to approach him from the sentimental side—then he gave way. If he liked people, he was a faithful friend." In a word, a rough diamond.

That the triumvirate in the Wilhelmstrasse abused their power was plainly hinted in 1894, first under cover of transparent nicknames, then without concealment, in the *Kladderadatsch* a Bismarckian organ. Kiderlen

challenged the editor  
to a duel and wounded him at the third shot.  
Duels in the  
army were recognized and approved, but civil  
servants were  
not supposed to take the law into their own  
hands. The  
offender was sentenced to four months, but was  
freed after a  
fortnight in the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein. The  
incident had  
no damaging effect on his career, for he had  
been sorely  
provoked. He had just been appointed Prussian  
Minister at  
Hamburg, where he passed a year, and in 1895  
he was pro-  
moted to Copenhagen. If there was little to be  
done in the  
quiet Danish capital there was much to be  
heard, for the  
periodical gatherings of the relatives of the  
venerable Christian  
IX made it the whispering gallery of Europe.  
His star was